DDA OCCASIONAL PAPERS

No. 7, May 2003

United Nations

# Disarmament in Conflict Prevention

Panel Discussion
United Nations, New York
1 October 2002

Department for Disarmament Affairs

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## *Disarmament in Conflict Prevention*

*PANEL DISCUSSION*
*UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK*
*1 OCTOBER 2002*

United Nations
Department for Disarmament Affairs

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# PREFACE

*The United Nations is increasingly recognizing the need to broaden its scope of conflict prevention measures. In his report, "Prevention of Armed Conflict,"[1] the Secretary-General stressed the importance of tapping into the collective assets of the United Nations system to address the cross-cutting nature of conflict prevention. Subsequently, in his report, "Road map for the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,"[2] the Secretary-General observed that "conflict prevention, like conflict itself, is a cross-cutting issue and cannot be implemented in isolation from policies in the development, security, political, human rights and environmental arenas."*

*His view was shared by the Security Council, which, in February 2001, reaffirmed "that the quest for peace requires a comprehensive, concerted and determined approach that addresses the root causes of conflicts...".[3]*

*Recent studies dealing with conflict prevention have also highlighted the growing need to find lasting solutions to acute political violence and armed conflict.*

*Against this background, the Department for Disarmament Affairs organized an open dialogue on the concept of disarmament as an integral tool to support conflict prevention strategies.*

*Noting that disarmament and conflict prevention were not two separate issues, but were essentially part of the same equation, Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, stressed the need for the international community to see "disarmament and conflict prevention as mutually reinforcing means to serve international peace and security".*

*Focusing on Africa and analyzing the relationship between the intensification of conflict and the excessive availability of weapons, Angélica Arce de Jeannet of Mexico pointed out that disarmament was an indispensable element of any conflict prevention strategy. Similarly, Herbert Wulf of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), speaking about practical disarmament measures, concluded that enhanced weapons control and checks on proliferation improved human security, stabilized societies and offered opportunities for peace and development.*

*Adriaan Verheul of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations based his perspectives on practical experience and proposed ten points for a successful Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation (DDR) programme. Patricia Lewis of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) provided insights on the valuable contribution from NGOs to weapons collection programmes and reaffirmed the necessity of a reinforced partnership between them and the UN.*

*Sylvester Rowe, Ambassador of Sierra Leone, cited his country as a case study. He believed that to prevent a recurrence of conflict in that country, preventive disarmament measures were needed at the national, regional and international levels to deal with the problem of illicit trade, circulation, trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons.*

*Occasional Paper 7 on "Disarmament in Conflict Prevention" presents the proceedings of this panel discussion.*

**Notes**

[1] *A/55/985*
[2] *A/56/326*
[3] *A/PRST/2001/5*

* * *

# *Opening statement*

*Jayantha Dhanapala**

***Abstract***

*Disarmament's principal aim is to contribute to international peace and security. But the benefits of mainstreaming disarmament can be felt in improved human security which depends on economic prosperity and social and political stability.*

Our panel will focus not on two subjects — disarmament and conflict prevention — but on one: disarmament ***in*** conflict prevention. This distinction has profound significance for the United Nations. We will see how disarmament and conflict prevention are mutually-reinforcing means to serve international peace and security.

Many observers and practitioners in world affairs customarily treat disarmament and conflict prevention as parallel rather than synergistic subjects. In their view, disarmament is simply the technical act of eliminating specific weapons, while conflict prevention involves action to address the deeper root causes of conflict and the various options available to national leaders and international organizations to remedy them.

Yet, people are becoming more aware of disarmament and Secretary-General Kofi Annan deserves much credit for that. Last year, in his report on the Prevention of Armed

* *Jayantha Dhanapala is United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.*

Conflict, he stated that "conflict prevention lies at the heart of the mandate of the United Nations".[1] He added that achieving this goal required mobilizing "the collective potential of the United Nations system" — literally the entire UN family.

He pointed out how disarmament treaties help by promoting the rule of law. He noted how transparency arrangements serve to reduce the risk of misunderstandings that lead to conflict. He described how weapons for development programmes — involving the collection of surplus arms in exchange for community-based development incentives — have been helping to prevent conflict both in conflict-prone and post-conflict societies. He also stressed the need to include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DD&R) mandates in peacekeeping and peace-building operations.

***Disarmament has become a classic cross-cutting issue***

This report and other such statements show how disarmament has evolved from a dry, technical field into a subject with profound implications for the UN system. It has become a classic cross-cutting issue — a collective good, with real benefits for everyone. Disarmament saves money - reduces threats to refugees, women, and children - and alleviates threats to the environment. It reduces the incidence and the effects of armed conflict. As a result, it also helps foreign investment, economic growth and trade.

These are a few important reasons why efforts are now underway within the United Nations to mainstream disarmament — that is, to ensure that virtually every component of the UN system understands what disarmament is all about, how its successes pay dividends for all, and why disarmament deserves much greater attention as a means to advance the full gamut of the principles and objectives of the UN Charter.

However, despite the disarmament dividend and the common-sense proposition that conflicts are better prevented than cured, significant obstacles remain in reaping such benefits. While many observers continue to ignore or to doubt the contributions that disarmament makes to conflict prevention, some international conferences over the past decade have fallen into a similar syndrome. This was apparent at the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, which ignored the question of how excessive military expenditures and over-armament were contributing to under-development — a central question also raised at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

Yet, the potential for progress is astonishing, even with respect to alleviating threats arising from small arms and light weapons. Starting with the Mali initiative a decade ago, practical disarmament measures have shown their potential to address grave security threats arising from such weaponry. In 2001, the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms exposed the human and economic costs of such weaponry for millions of people around the world. Participants at that Conference recognized that curbing this illicit trade would contribute to long-term development goals, to strengthening the rule of law, and to helping poor communities to improve the quality of their lives and to work their way out of poverty.

The following articles based on the presentations of the panelists offer three different insights on the challenge of disarmament in conflict prevention: the governmental, non-governmental and United Nations views. All three are legitimate and together they give a balanced and rich perspective on the concept of disarmament ***in*** conflict prevention.

***Note***

[1] A/55/985.

* * *

# *The role of disarmament in prevention of armed conflict*

*María Angélica Arce de Jeannet**

***Abstract***

*In order for disarmament to be an effective tool of conflict prevention, the author suggests that five conditions be met: observance of arms embargoes; implementation of commitments to the Programme of Action of the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms; effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; collection and destruction of small arms; and codification of principles of conflict prevention.*

One of the principal conclusions drawn from the United Nations participation in conflict situations in various parts of the world has been the need to promote the implementation of activities to prevent the emergence of conflicts.

Today Africa is one of the regions where this need is most evident. While Member States have noted various reports of the Secretary-General concerning the need to examine the root causes of conflicts, I wish to highlight that a critical factor promoting the intensification of a conflict is the excessive availability of weapons.

Much has been said on this subject. In particular, that the stockpiling of more weapons than are needed for the legit-

* *María Angélica Arce de Jeannet is Minister at the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations.*

imate self-defense of any state leads to a spiralling arms race between the States or parties involved. Unfortunately, there will always be arms dealers who, by legitimate or illegitimate means, are prepared to meet the demand for weapons.

In order for disarmament to become an effective means of conflict prevention, a number of conditions must be met:

**Fulfillment of the obligation to observe arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council.** This obligation is not observed in all cases, as seen today in Liberia. Liberia is a country subject to an arms embargo and yet small arms and light weapons continue to flow both to the armed forces of the Liberian Government and to the armed rebel groups in that country.

Of utmost concern to the international community is the insecurity and instability that arms trafficking poses for the peace process in neighboring Sierra Leone, where the United Nations has its largest peacekeeping operation, as well as in the subregion of the Mano River Union, comprising Sierra Leone, New Guinea and Liberia.

**Full implementation of the commitments undertaken in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted at the UN Conference held in July 2001.** In this regard, I wish to point out that it is the responsibility first and foremost of all arms exporting States to refrain from supplying weapons to regions in conflict or to countries that are subject to an arms embargo.

**Implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants.** More and more, this component is included in the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations. It is important for the international community to contribute the funds necessary to carry out

the activities envisaged in this type of programme. In order to break the cycle of violence, combatants must be effectively demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life and given opportunities for effective employment. In the absence of such programmes, we will continue to see the movement and recruitment of combatants from one country to the other, with the inevitable sequel of a continuing conflict.

**The collection and destruction of weapons.** In this realm, there is need for cooperation and close coordination between the United Nations, its agencies, international financial organizations and the donor community. The Department for Disarmament Affairs has been a pioneer in this field with the first such project in Albania. Subsequently, the Group of Interested States (GIS) in the framework of General Assembly resolutions dealing with the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures, promoted and financed other similar projects in various regions. These efforts leading to the implementation of some of the commitments undertaken at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms should be encouraged.

***Arms exporting States should refrain from supplying weapons to regions in conflict or to countries that are subject to an arms embargo.***

**The need to codify the theory to bring it in line with United Nations practice.** The June 2001 report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Prevention of Armed Conflict",[1] stressed the need to arrive at a culture of conflict prevention in which States seek advice and assistance from the international community to help them eliminate the root causes of conflict, when necessary and at the earliest possible phase. The report lays down ten principles to guide the United Nations in future areas of conflict prevention. In particular, these principles include, the adoption of preventive measures

to address and cope with the socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional and political causes often at the root of conflict.

In his recent report on small arms, the Secretary-General presented 12 additional recommendations aimed at combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, some of which specifically refer to conflict prevention activities. The report was submitted to the Security Council in accordance with its Presidential Statement of 31 August 2001.[2]

In conclusion, I should like to point out that disarmament is a key element for any conflict prevention strategy. The lessening of tensions between States and parties to a conflict will be facilitated by the collection and destruction of surplus weapons, the disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants, the observance of arms embargoes, prohibition of the supply of arms to non-State actors, and much more effective monitoring of the activities of brokers in the international arms trade.

***Notes***

[1] A/55/985.

[2] The Security Council met on 11 October 2002 in an open meeting which yielded support for the Programme of Action of the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms. The Council had before it the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, S/2002/1053, which addresses ways in which the Council can contribute to dealing with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, taking into account the views of Member States, recent experiences in the field and the contents of Council presidential statement S/PRST/2001/21.

* * *

# *Practical disarmament measures*

*Herbert Wulf**

***Abstract***

*After reviewing the root causes of violence using small arms (demand-side and supply-side explanations), the author suggests practical options for arms control and disarmament. He places special emphasis on the need for better management of stockpiles and on-the-spot destruction of surplus goods.*

Time has come to discuss how the concept of disarmament can be integrated into conflict prevention strategies. In that respect, I would like to focus on practical disarmament measures as described in General Assembly resolutions, then to link this question to the conflict prevention issue or, more directly, how does disarmament relate to conflict prevention?

**Opportunities for practical disarmament measures**

In its resolution 56/24 P of 30 October 2001,[1] the General Assembly emphasized that "*a comprehensive and integrated approach towards certain practical disarmament measures often is a prerequisite to maintaining and consolidating peace and security...*". Such a concept of practical disarmament embodies a range of measures from collection and

* *Herbert Wulf is former Director of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Germany. He is currently a Senior Fellow at the Center.*

responsible disposal of small arms, light weapons and ammunition and their destruction, to demining and conversion, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and confidence building and transparency.

Certain periods provide a window of opportunity for practical disarmament and arms control, while at other times the chances are minimal or even non-existent. Disarmament and arms control can help prevent conflicts or facilitate crisis management before conflicts break out, when they emerge and when they seem to turn into a crisis. Similarly, when warring parties have agreed to a cease-fire during peacekeeping operations or in post-conflict situations, practical disarmament like demobilization and weapons collection and destruction is an essential means to facilitate the stabilization of war-torn societies. Obviously, other periods of active conflict and war by no means provide fruitful grounds for disarmament. *Figure 1* illustrates the opportunities for practical disarmament measures.

**Arms availability and the root causes of conflict**

There are two competing notions about the driving force behind armed violence: motives versus tools. "Guns don't kill people. People kill people." If people wish to commit such acts, they will do so, using whatever instruments they can find. If they are not inclined toward violence, the availability of weapons will not change their minds. In this scenario, **motives**, not tools, are the driving force behind armed violence. Such a demand-side explanation suggests that when the root causes of violence diminish, the incidence of violence will decline accordingly.

People are shot more frequently when small arms and light weapons are easily **available**. The motives may be either defensive or offensive, legitimate or illegitimate or related to crime or politics. This supply-side explanation suggests that

*Figure 1: Windows of opportunity for practical disarmament*

when firearms are accessible, people use them more often than when they are difficult to obtain. Disputes turn more violent more easily, violence becomes more destructive, and conflicts more difficult to settle.

Policy makers wishing to prevent firearm violence will act in different ways. If they believe that motives are the driving force behind armed violence, they will direct their efforts to deterring crime and political violence or removing its root causes. If they focus on the dangers of easy access to the tools of violence, they will try to reduce the stock of weaponry in society and control its flow, possession and use. The sponsors of GA resolution 56/24 P, along with academic and military experts, are well aware that weapons are not the primary cause of violent conflicts. Common sense (and practical experience) suggest that there is merit in both of these approaches. Efforts to remove the root causes of violence should not prevent us from removing the surplus tools of violence from society and vice versa. *Figure 2* illustrates the relationship between the root causes of armed violence and firearms violence and the aggravating and mitigating factors of small arms availability and practical disarmament measures.

**Political constraints**

Public awareness of the destabilizing function of small arms and light weapons has increased in the last five years. Often, however, the political will to change the situation is lacking. It is time to move on from the **analysis of the problem to a more action oriented approach.**

The issue of small arms control is all too quickly associated with **illicit trafficking**. Illegal acts should not be used as a scapegoat for government inaction or even dangerous policies. It can safely be said that the illicit trade is much smaller than licit (government sanctioned) trade. Licit trade and transfers to governments also constitute a serious problem.

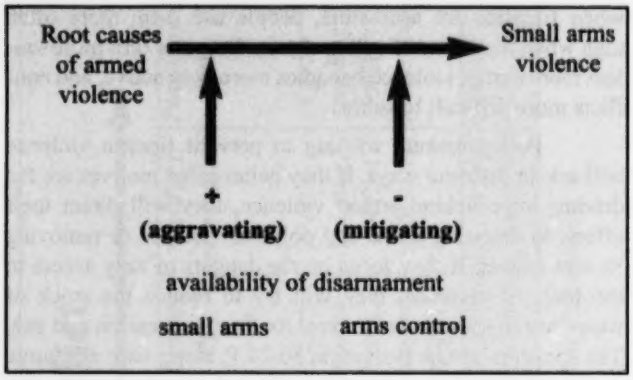


*Figure 2: Aggravating and mitigating factors of armed violence*

The removal of small arms and light weapons needs to conceptually transcend the **arms control approach.** Since small arms are so widely dispersed at all societal levels and worldwide, control measures need to take into account that the involvement of actors is much larger. Arms control of major conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction is about the control of military technology to prevent war; small arms control impacts the functioning of the state monopoly of force. From a victim's perspective it makes no difference if the wounds stem from war, internal strife, criminal or accidental violence.

Production of new weapons is currently only one of the problems. The **availability of existing stocks** and the (uncontrolled) circulation of arms — often surplus or second -hand weapons — has increasingly become an issue of concern. Surplus, as a result of disarmament or the end of wars, has become the negative by-product of disarmament.

It is within the control of political actors to do something practical and effective to control small arms. If the **political will** is there to go beyond stop-gap measures and introduce systematic controls and reduction measures, the problem

can be dramatically reduced — if not solved. Governments do not have to wait for an international agreement. Besides, unilateral actions are possible and useful.

**Practical options for control and disarmament**

The range of available options to meet the challenge of small arms proliferation and their use are extensive. Quite a few options have been put forward in the Programme of Action of the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms. Four areas that require attention are:

**Licit trade**: Possible measures range from strengthening and enforcing existing national laws to enhancing weapons control, from marking to greater transparency measures and effective accountability.

**Illicit trafficking**: A range of measures can be taken such as improving data collection, ensuring comprehensive and accurate record-keeping, cooperation in tracing illicit flows and destruction of confiscated weapons.

**Existing circulation and surplus stocks**: Identification of existing and surplus stocks, improving storage and security capacities, weapon collection programmes and destruction of surplus are essential tools to stop proliferation.

**Unlawful use and civilian possession**: Measures range from adopting a clear and unambiguous legal basis for possession and use to suppressing and removing the tools of violence.

**Experience in small arms destruction**

Given the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons and recognizing the uncontrolled spread of these weapons to all levels of society in certain conflict areas, it is essential to reduce the total number of weapons in circulation. Initiatives related to disarmament and demobilization, as well as the management of surplus

weapons accumulated from military reform and downsizing, need to consider the disposal and destruction of weapons. Particularly as it concerns small arms and munitions, disarmament plans need to include disposal and preferably destruction measures. So far, such measures have largely been introduced on an ad hoc basis. Systematic destruction of surplus arms and ammunition could prevent their further spread.

Occasionally, the lack of resources has been identified as one of the bottlenecks to the immediate destruction of weapons or to making surplus weapons militarily useless on the spot. While this discouraging experience is not disputed, it is argued here that:

• numerous destruction **technologies** are available (although not always at the spot where they are needed); and,

• the know-how and financial **resources** required are not dramatically prevalent.

In other words, there are good reasons not to delay the destruction of surplus weapons. A plethora of information and experiences has been gathered, not only in post-conflict situations, but also in domestic efforts to destroy surplus or deactivated military and seized illegal weapons. So far what is lacking is a systematic approach to integrate these measures into conflict prevention programmes.[2]

Weapons are considered an object of value accounts which accounts for the slow destruction process of the surplus. Economic interests in selling, warehousing or mothballing these weapons for later use often prevent their immediate destruction.

**Conclusions and lessons learned**

It is clear from this brief survey that disarmament can play an important role during periods of conflict prevention, as well as in post-conflict situations. While weapon collection programmes rarely reduce the desire for weapons, the

easy availability of small arms and light weapons is a strong incentive to initiate practical disarmament measures in order to mitigate the proliferation problem. Enhanced weapon control and checks on proliferation improve human security, stabilize societies and offer opportunities for peace and development. Definitive disposal is needed. The know-how to destroy small arms exists and can be made available relatively easily since it is not a very complicated process. The direct cost of destruction, depending on the methods used, is not a serious barrier. Peace treaties, disarmament or arms control negotiations usually have only vague goals or provisions (if any) on destruction. It is therefore recommended to include such provisions for destruction in these instruments and talks.

***Notes***

[1] Resolution 56/24 P, introduced by Germany, recalled five previous resolutions on practical disarmament measures from 1996 to 2000.

[2] The reference is to both confiscated illicit surplus weapons and to surplus stocks of the armed forces. If governments continue to sell their surplus stocks, proliferation will continue. The German armed forces destroyed 58,000 surplus G3 rifles in the summer of 2002 and a total of 200,000 pieces in 2002.

* * *

# *Ten basic points for a successful DDR programme*

*Adriaan Verheul**

***Abstract***

*Based on the experience of UN peace operations, the author outlines ten aspects of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme which must all work together to make it successful.*

Coming from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), my perspective about disarmament in conflict prevention is based on our practical experience on the ground and it is from that experience that I would like to share with you ten points for a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.

**1. DDR is first and foremost a political exercise**

Voluntary DDR programmes cannot start and progress without the political will and mutual trust of the parties to the conflict — both commodities that are usually in short supply during the early phases of a peace process. To voluntarily shut down your military capacity is to close an option for reaching your political goals. Therefore, the parties' engagement in DDR is an expression of their willingness to convert from a military to a civilian form of politics and that willingness — whether brought about by stalemate or

* *Adriaan Verheul is Special Assistant to the Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.*

threat of defeat — is the political *sine qua non* for a DDR process. DDR is the result of both a political and military dynamic and, at the same time, creates its own political dynamic that will eventually strengthen and accelerate a peace process.

**2. Confidence is key**

The parties to any given conflict must gain the confidence that the peace process will hold and, furthermore, that pursuing peace will serve their interests more than a return to war. Once set in motion, a progressing DDR programme can build confidence itself, but to begin with there will have to be some basic confidence.

**3. Information is essential**

This applies to information *from* as well as *to* the parties. Information on the numbers of combatants and their location needed for planning DDR is often available only from the parties. The parties will have to be as transparent as possible, since any deviations from reality may come to haunt them later. At the same time, information about the process itself must keep flowing to all involved to keep momentum. Creating incentives is good, but they will not work if they are not communicated to the fighters in the bush.

***The parties will have to be as transparent as possible, since any deviations from reality may come to haunt them later.***

**4. There should be light at the end of the tunnel**

From the fighters' perspective, there is no logic in disarming unless he or she *knows* there is a future for his or her family without the need to keep a weapon for either security or economic reasons. Integration, whether it be in a new national army or in the economy, should be a real prospect, backed up by well-funded programmes and quick impact projects, and not based solely on political promises.

Otherwise, ex-fighters may return to the bush or revert to crime.

**5. Neighbours have to do their part as well**

In conflicts with an international dimension, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the situation is complicated by the fact that the domestic combatants will not begin DDR until the regional actors and benefactors also commit to the peace process and withdraw their forces or offer guarantees that returning ex-combatants will be treated fairly. In other cases, such as Sierra Leone, neighbouring countries should not be available as harbours of refuge for fighters who do not wish to join a DDR programme.

**6. DDR processes form a natural continuum**

Where disarmament finishes, demobilization begins, to be followed by reintegration, with each step being the necessary condition for the other. This continuum requires the participation of local actors and international assistance in a well-sequenced, coordinated effort covering a broad spectrum of activity. In reality, there is much more than D, D and R. The three capital letters usually hide an organizationally complex and logistically challenging process. For example, before ex-combatants can report to their cantonment areas (which are rarely linked to good roads), there has to be in place a system for receiving fighters and issuing them ID cards, as well as a system for dismantling and destroying their weapons. Within the DDR continuum, there should be minimum delays between the various steps. In a fragile environment, one can rarely afford the security risks associated with large numbers of idle and unemployed men whose only skill is handling weapons.

***A DDR programme is an organizationally complex and logistically challenging process.***

**7. No organization can do it all**

Many organizations, both within and beyond the United

Nations family, have expertise and experience in certain aspects of DDR, but no one can claim to command the entire process. The World Bank, for example, has become a key player in the financial management of DDR programmes and in supporting programmes for the reintegration of ex-fighters. But the Bank cannot, as a peacekeeping operation would, create the necessary security and political conditions on the ground to make it work. Thus, the first priority in planning for DDR should be to clearly define the division of labour between the various partners (national, bilateral and international) and ensure that there is a unity of effort. It is vital that actors on the ground not compete for resources and force donors to pick and choose activities rather than support a cohesive and integrated process.

***The longer we have to wait for money, the greater the risk that ex-combatants lose faith in the process.***

**8. There are always more Rs to deal with**

DDR has both short-term and long-term objectives and is usually linked to the wider national recovery, rehabilitation, resettlement, reconciliation and reform. For example, disarmament and demobilization are often preconditions for reforming the national military and police (often inflated as a result of conflict). This reform may, in turn, be fundamental to a democratization process. Similarly, reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life will have to be linked with justice and reconciliation efforts. Also, the economy will have to be able to absorb these men and women, whose return to communities will often coincide with the return of IDPs and refugees.

**9. DDR needs strong management, preferably local**

Successful DDR requires a strong, dedicated management structure to implement and supervise the process. When local capacity is limited, this may often need direct support

from the international community. In some cases, peacekeeping operations have assumed overall coordinating authority for DDR, but wherever politically and practically possible, the emphasis should be on ensuring local ownership and building a national institution. The latter model was particularly successful in Sierra Leone.

**10. No gaps in funding, please**

Financial support for the various elements in the DDR sequence may come from differing sources, resulting in gaps: the UN assessed contributions may be available for cantonment and security aspects included in the budget of a peace operation, whereas humanitarian and development assistance have to rely on voluntary sources. Any gaps may have serious consequences for the sustainability of the peace process. Funding should ideally be committed for the whole of the DDR process. However, it has often proved difficult to find sufficient, consistent donor support for DDR programmes.

The longer we have to wait for money, the greater the risk that ex-combatants lose faith in the process. One way to help alleviate such problems might be to seek from the assessed finances of the operation funds for "bridging" programmes and short term reintegration immediately after demobilization.

This concludes the list of ten points. There are, of course, many more to make. But at the end of the day, what counts is not the number of points but how well they are linked together. In DDR, as in so many other human undertakings, the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts.

* * *

# *The role of NGOs in disarmament and conflict prevention*

*Patricia Lewis**

***Abstract***

*The author states that conflict prevention cannot occur without disarmament. As such, the presentation touches upon practical disarmament measures, policy issues and weapons in the context of conflict prevention. It focuses on the important role that NGOs play in disarmament activities, particularly landmine and small arms projects. The partnership of governments, the United Nations and NGOs requires cooperation at all non-governmental levels (from the grassroots to the expert technical levels dealing with governments) on policy and advocacy issues, in negotiations, in weapons collection and destruction programmes, education and research.*

Disarmament is an integral and necessary part of conflict prevention — therefore, conflict prevention cannot occur without disarmament. Is it not the very humanitarian concern of conflict prevention, which propels us to work towards disarmament? And yet, within the structures for conflict prevention that have been set up in governments, regions, and globally, we always seem to be ignoring the critical issue of disarmament. I therefore welcome this discussion because it is about time we were reminded of the necessity of disarmament for conflict prevention.

* *Patricia Lewis is Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), Geneva*

I want to look at a number of things. First and foremost, I would like to address practical disarmament measures, some of which Herbert Wulf referred to and then move on to policy issues. I want to make the connection between small arms, landmines, biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, as well as large conventional forces, when talking about conflict prevention. I want, as well to look at the various roles of NGOs. The importance that they have in all of those spheres and then look at some very real reasons for developing the partnership between governments, the United Nations and NGOs, if we are indeed to prevent conflict.

One of the most important commissions set up on conflict prevention was the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (CCPDC) in 1994.[1] That commission said "that the prevention of deadly conflict is too hard intellectually, technically and politically to be the responsibility of a single institution or government, no matter how powerful. Strengths must be pooled, burdens shared, labour divided between actors". Some of those actors have to be non-governmental. If we look at the practical things that non-governmental actors do, we see examples in the cases of landmines and small arms. Local NGOs working in the field carry out weapons collection, mine disposal, mine and weapons awareness and educational programmes in societies. Without those non-governmental organizations working on the ground - few of the initiatives and policies that governments wish to promote and take action on, would actually ever be implemented. In some countries, governments rely on non-governmental action in the field for these activities. That is obvious to those who have worked in the field. As to small arms and landmines, the role of NGOs in the prac-

***Without NGOs working on the ground — few of the initiatives and policies that governments wish to take action on would ever be implemented.***

tical disposal and awareness campaigns is well known.

What is perhaps not well known is the importance of multi-track diplomacy in the field as well as on the international stage. There are multiple causes of conflict. The causes of a large number of those conflicts are based in the community. Without the community, its representatives and NGOs, those causes could not be addressed. As Herbert Wulf said, one of the things that can escalate a conflict is the number or the availability of weapons. Another is the types of weapons that are used. Non-governmental actors must address all of these issues. In addition, unless non-governmental actors are brought into multi-track diplomacy efforts, the real causes and the real solutions to conflict and conflict prevention cannot be addressed properly. I cannot stress that strongly enough. One of the problems we have had in the prevention and the resolution of conflict is the sidelining of those who are most intimately involved. This clearly cannot work properly.

***Without the community, its representatives and NGOs, the multiple causes of conflict cannot be addressed.***

Connected with that is the whole issue of policy advice and advocacy as well as information and research. There is a continuum of grass roots NGOs from those connected at the local level carrying out practical disarmament, awareness and education programmes to those at a more expert technical level dealing with governments and with the United Nations bodies on the international scene. Those organizations have to work together. In some spheres they work well together. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is one very good example of where you have a real continuum between policy, advocacy and on-the-ground action. Those on-the-ground work with those at the policy level, keeping each other informed and aware of what the

other is doing. In this way, they actually affect each other's work. This happens less in other spheres. For example, in the field of biological weapons, there are few NGOs or grass roots organizations. Almost all the organizations in the non-governmental sphere are at the expert level. This affects the negotiations. When the grass roots are not involved, the NGOs working at the community level do not connect with NGOs at the policy expert level. The whole subject then suffers. Biological Weapons is one example where NGOs have a direct influence on negotiations.

The landmine campaign has done something important — the publication of an annual report on the state of landmines.[2] It is now being proposed that NGOs working on biological weapons produce a similar annual report, called the Biological Weapons Prevention Project. A group of NGOs have collaborated on developing a network of experts and grass roots community members to produce an annual report on the state of the Biological Weapons Convention, its compliance, what countries are doing in terms of national legislation, commitments to the various confidence-building measures, as well as other commitments under the treaty. It is hoped that this will bring about a more community-based awareness of the issue of biological weapons and thus contribute to preventing a BW conflict.

In terms of small arms and light weapons (SALW), a number of NGOs generate a large amount of information and material. For example, the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Small Arms Survey (SAS) all provide information, research, data bases and help lines. They also produce educational and public awareness material. All of their activities are critical in informing the public of the policy debate on SALW issues, influencing negotiations and having a positive impact on the actual groundwork. Without

the work of NGOs in research, information and policy advocacy, the international community would be far worse off.

One key NGO sector that should not go unmentioned, and yet often gets overlooked when it comes to practical work, is women, who comprise over 50% of the world's population. Despite the important role that they must play and do play in all societies, women are continually ignored in the policy community, at the practical disarmament level, in multi-track diplomacy and in negotiations. One of the important things that we have achieved over the last few years is to make people more aware that unless women are completely involved at every single level of disarmament and conflict prevention, these things will not work properly. I cite Jamila, an Afghan woman from the Afghan Women's Network, who said, "When the UN is looking for leaders, look to us. Help our networks to reach and assist women and their families. Women must be included in any peace building effort to ensure peace and lasting security".[3]

***A group of NGOs have proposed to produce an annual report on the state of the Biological Weapons Convention.***

I want to turn now to some examples which inspire us and let us know the work of NGOs on the ground. On the issue of small arms, we have developed a fifty-page list of activities since July 2001 that have been taking place in response to the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. For instance, the Flames of Peace weapons collection programmes in a number of countries such as Sierra Leone, Mali, Cambodia and recently in Nigeria.

Viva Rio, a large and significant NGO in Brazil, has worked with the Brazilian army recently destroying 10,000 guns. In Mozambique, the Tools for Arms programme, a coalition of NGOs, has collected and destroyed over 200,000

weapons over the last few years. Recently, Viva Rio and the Espacios Foundation of Argentina hosted a workshop[4] that brought together NGO networks from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Spain. The principal recommendations were for a proposal to create a disarmament web site with content in Spanish and Portuguese. The web site will serve as a virtual information source for the general public, with daily news updates, research, and information on the topics of arms and reducing armed violence. Viva Rio has posted all the information, including comparative statistics on SALW, on the new web site.

***Without the work of the NGOs in research, information and policy advocacy, we in the international community would be far worse off.***

The idea is to build awareness, to reach down into the community and have some real effects on the ground.

Another example is the Department for Disarmament Affairs which is partnering an education for disarmament programme with the Hague Appeal for Peace. This is a pilot project at the moment which offers young people alternatives to the use of weapons and promotes non-violent behavior. Starting in Albania, Cambodia, Niger and Peru, the project aims to sustain community efforts for weapons collection for development programmes.

UNDP is doing a great deal through the *Kosovo Youth Network*, where it is supporting a coalition of 38 groups of over 18,000 young people who have carried out regional and local campaigns against violence and weapons.

UNICEF is conducting a *life skills project* with young people in Kosovo — both in and out of school — educating them about the dangers posed by small arms and conducting qualitative research on adopting safe and tolerant practices.

Governments are doing many things in partnership

with NGOs. The Norwegian government is conducting a one-year non-governmental project on *Community Safety on Firearms in Malawi*. This project is focusing on encouraging communities to tackle small arms proliferation through established community policy forums in ten districts and is establishing a police reform programme sponsored by the United Kingdom. Egypt is offering scholarships to government officials from African States and working with non-governmental organizations in those states.

In August and September 2001, the Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Programme of Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development (PCASED) coordinated two "Training of trainers" workshops in Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast for military, police and other security forces in the control of SALW in Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal. This was an attempt to reach into the community and out to the NGOs in those countries.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is working with non-state actors and other arms groups to instill an understanding of the humanitarian and human rights consequences of small arms. It is also an advocate of greater awareness of the human consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and conducting research, along with the World Health Organization, Johns Hopkins University and the Small Arms Survey, on the impact that small arms have on the conduct of humanitarian work in the field.

The humanitarian and the human rights communities are taking up the issue of disarmament as conflict prevention. There are a number of other action-oriented research programmes taking place in the international, local and regional communities which aim to have an effect on the ground. These examples, which only scratch the surface of what has occurred since last July, are encouraging. Despite general

concern that the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in SALW did not produce a politically binding document and only dealt with a small part of the whole SALW issue, nonetheless it has had a real effect on the ground and a beneficial effect on people's lives. This again shows how partnership between governments, UN organizations and NGOs can have a real impact.

In the final analysis, NGOs, governments and the UN system need to cooperate to partner at all levels on policy issues in negotiations, weapons collection, weapons destruction, education and awareness and research, all of which contribute to conflict prevention. Let me highlight one group's work, Global Action to Prevent War - a worldwide coalition of NGOs dealing with every type of weapons system and every type of conflict. Disarmament is at the heart of this programme trying to prevent conflict and eventually, to prevent war. I want to end with a quote from Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who recently said, "partnership with non-governmental organizations is no longer an option, it is a necessity".

***Notes***

[1] The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict ceased operations in December 1999. The Commission's report, "Preventing Deadly Conflict", issued in 1997 was received by the conflict prevention communities as one of the most comprehensive of its kind.

[2] In June 1998, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines established the "Landmine Monitor," a unique and unprecedented civil society based reporting network to systematically monitor and document States parties' compliance with the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and the humanitarian response to the global landmine crisis. "Landmine Monitor" complements the existing state-based reporting and compliance mechanisms established by the Treaty.

[3] Hill, Felicity, 2001. NGO Perspectives: NGOs and the Security Council. Disarmament Forum, one.2002, pp. 27-30.

[4] The MERCOSUR NGO's workshop held in Rio de Janeiro (11-13 April) launched a web site in time to cover the International Gun Destruction Day, 9 July 2002. See www.desarme.org.

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# *Sierra Leone: Pre-war and post-war security*

*Sylvester Ekundayo Rowe**

***Abstract***

*Using the civil war in Sierra Leone as a case study, the author traces the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and its resultant threat to that country's peace and security. Besides its own disarmament initiatives, government support for more disarmament and confidence-building measures including the ECOWAS Moratorium on SALW have contributed to preventing a recurrence of conflict. Still, lessons learned and the challenges in the post-conflict era underscore the need for the Government, ECOWAS and the international community to embrace disarmament in small arms and light weapons as one of the guiding principles of conflict prevention.*

Until the late 1980s, there was hardly any serious concern about the flow of small arms and light weapons in Sierra Leone. If there was any concern at all it was about the occasional incidents of armed robbery. The country had relatively tight firearms and ammunition legislation, before and after independence to control civilian possession and transfer of arms. Compared to other parts of Africa, Sierra Leone was fortunate that its struggle for independence was relatively peaceful. There was no large scale organized armed war of

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liberation against the colonial power. The territory of Sierra Leone was never used with or without the consent of the government as a base for training freedom fighters or rebels. I should add that diamonds were smuggled out of the country, but not for the illicit trade in arms. The term "blood diamonds" was not in the West African political and security vocabulary. That was peace time. Disarmament in conflict prevention was not an issue.

However, two developments were to change the entire peace and security spectrum in Sierra Leone. The first was internal and could be described as the militarization of governance. This was the effort by the army to seize political power by force or the threat of use of force. Between 1967 and 1997 there were at least eight coups and attempted coups in Sierra Leone. Military juntas calling themselves National Reformation Council (NRC), National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC), and Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), all chose bullets instead of ballot boxes to govern the people.

Militarization of governance introduced a new culture of violence in a country that historically had enjoyed a high level of security and stability. In its wake, insecurity and an increase in the flow of arms was also brought into the country. The relationship between the incidence of coups and counter coups and the accumulation of arms in Sierra Leone during the pre-war years was evident.

On the one hand, the illegal regimes or juntas, especially the so-called Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), were determined to reinforce their control through an accumulation of arms and ammunition. On the other hand, as was evidenced by the emergence of the pro-democracy Civil Defense Force (CDF) in 1997, more arms were imported to counter the effort of those illegal regimes to consolidate

their iron fist rule over the people. It should be pointed out here that the arming of the CDF was the direct result of the defection to the rebels by sections of the national army, and following the decision of the 1997 coup leaders to invite the rebels to join them in a military-rebel coalition government.

***The relationship between the incidence of coups and counter coups and the accumulation of arms in Sierra Leone during the pre-war years was evident.***

According to one school of thought, the 1997 coup succeeded because of the failure of the democratically-elected government to allocate adequate resources to security - that the decision, based on budgetary constraints, not to review the contract of the South African security group, Executive Outcome, hired by the NPRC junta, gave the rebels the upper hand to escalate their war. Ironically, the leaders of the NPRC junta justified their overthrow of the civilian government of President Momoh, among other things, by the failure of the civilian government to provide soldiers at the war front with adequate resources, in their own words, to "prosecute the war" against the rebels.

The second development that changed the peace and security spectrum was external. It could be described as the exportation of warlord adventurism to Sierra Leone. From across the border, Warlord Foday Sankoh launched what became the brutal rebel war in Sierra Leone in 1991 with the support of one of the warlords in the Liberian civil war. The Security Council, in resolution 1343 (2001) confirmed this, albeit belatedly, when it determined that the active support provided by Liberia for armed rebel groups in neighbouring countries, and in particular its support for the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) in Sierra Leone, constituted a

threat to international peace and security in the West African region.

The exportation of war-lord adventurism to Sierra Leone has been by far the most dangerous threat to peace and security in the country, and in the subregion as a whole. In other words, while the accumulation of small arms and light weapons by de facto military governments was a matter of serious concern, the need for disarmament as a means of preventing conflict became even more urgent when armed rebel groups with external support began to infiltrate the eastern borders of the country.

It is now common knowledge that the civil war in Liberia opened the flood gates of illicit arms into Sierra Leone. Most of the arms used by the RUF transited through Liberia. Of course one must note that like many other parts of the developing world, the West African subregion has been used as a dumping ground for small, second-hand, obsolete and overstocked small arms and light weapons from manufacturers and arms merchants outside the continent. Together with the military coups and warlord adventurism from outside the borders, the international illicit trade and transfer of such weapons has contributed to the insecurity of the state of Sierra Leone.

***While the accumulation of small arms and light weapons by de facto military governments was a matter of serious concern, the need for disarmament as a means of preventing conflict became even more urgent.***

The capacity of the Sierra Leone government to use disarmament as a means of conflict prevention was limited by, among other things, the disloyalty of the regular armed forces and the material support provided by external sources to the rebel movement. However, in the course of the war the present civilian Government took measures to prevent a recurrence of the nine year conflict — measures that would

also facilitate the consolidation of peace. These measures could be summarized as follows:

1. **The launching of a national DDR programme in 1998**. This was initiated by the Government several months after the illegal military/rebel regime was dislodged from the capital by the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) and the reinstatement of the democratically elected government. An executing agency of the programme, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), was established before the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement with the RUF rebels. From its inception in August 1998 to June 1999, the end of the first phase, a total of 3,183 ex-combatants had been disarmed.

2. **The insistence that the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement with the rebels must include a comprehensive DDR mechanism**. While the RUF was more interested in cabinet posts and its participation or inclusion in governance, the Government was more concerned about preventing a recurrence of the conflict through the comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. In fact, the Government regarded the DDR provisions as the most important elements of the Peace Agreement. Under the DDR, over 45,000 ex-combatants were disarmed and demobilized.

***The capacity of the Sierra Leone government to use disarmament as a means of conflict prevention was limited by the disloyalty of the regular armed forces and the material support provided by external sources to the rebel movement.***

3. **The launching in December 2001 of the Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme (CACD)**. The programme coordinated by the Sierra Leone Police, with the support of the United Nations Mission in

Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), was part of the Government's overall post security and disarmament strategy. It was compulsory and conducted under existing national legislation that prohibits the possession of unlicensed weapons. There were no monetary incentives such as buy-back. Before and during the two-month programme, there were workshops and meetings at the village, chiefdom and district levels to sensitize the communities to the dangers of the illegal possession of arms and the benefits of disarmament for sustainable peace in the country.

***In fact, the Government regarded the DDR provisions as the most important elements of the Peace Agreement.***

4. **The collection and destruction of 9,479 unlicensed shot guns, pistols and revolvers**. One hundred thirty-five non-licensable weapons, including AK-47s, AK-58s, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and SA rifles, were also collected and destroyed. In the course of the exercise, 34,924 rounds of ammunition including hand grenades and rocket-propelled bombs (RPBs) were collected and destroyed. After the March 31 deadline, the police undertook a proactive disarmament campaign in the form of cordon and search operations to recover arms that may have been deliberately hidden. Thirteen shotguns and 2 mortar bombs were collected. The CACD was considered a success. The possibility of a further exercise cannot be ruled out.

In addition to its own disarmament initiatives, the Government also supported disarmament and confidence-building measures that are intended to contribute to the prevention or recurrence of conflict in Sierra Leone. These included:

1. Continued acceptance by the Government of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1171 (1998) requiring the Government to notify the Council through the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997), of

all imports of arms or related material. The restrictions and other measures imposed by resolution 1171 (1998) were also intended to reduce the chances of further conflict. According to paragraph 7 of the resolution, the Security Council is ready to terminate those measures once the control of the Government of Sierra Leone has been fully-established over all its territory, and when all non-governmental forces have been disarmed and demobilized. Post-war security considerations are therefore paramount. Indeed, the Government has welcomed the assurance that the downsizing of UNAMSIL would be gradual in order not to jeopardize the progress achieved so far in stabilizing Sierra Leone, and that steps must be taken to minimize the remaining threats and to support the consolidation of peace.

***Disarmament was compulsory and conducted under existing national legislation that prohibits the possession of unlicensed weapons.***

2. Unequivocal support by the Sierra Leone Government for Security Council resolution 1343 (2001), on sanctions against Liberia, including the arms embargo. Evidently, and as the UN Secretary-General has re-emphasized, the situation in Liberia constitutes the most serious threat to peace and stability that now prevails in Sierra Leone. The arms embargo is an essential means of maintaining that stability and of ensuring that Sierra Leone does not slide back to armed conflict.

3. Continued support for the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons and its recent three year extension.

Further preventive disarmament measures at the national, regional and international levels are needed to deal with the problem of illicit trade, circulation, trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons and to prevent a recur-

rence of conflict in Sierra Leone. For instance, following the successful Programme, serious consideration could be given to a formal "weapons for development" project similar to those undertaken in Albania and Niger. The findings of the recent Disarmament Assessment Mission to Sierra Leone, under the auspices of the Group of Interested States on Practical Disarmament Measures, should help to throw some light on the viability of such a project.

Practical disarmament measures at the national level are essential but not always enough to prevent conflict or, as in Sierra Leone, to prevent the recurrence of armed conflict. They should be supported by effective measures at the regional and international levels, such as legally-binding agreements related to marking, transfer and exportation of small arms and light weapons.

The experience of the devastating consequences of these weapons suggests that codes of conduct on arms exports and similar arrangements as well as joint regional action and moratoria without effective monitoring mechanisms, are no longer enough to deal with the scourge of small arms and light weapons. The United Nations Firearms Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components, as part of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, is one example of the bold step that is required to strengthen conflict prevention through the control of conventional armament.

***The arms embargo is an essential means of maintaining that stability and of ensuring that Sierra Leone does not slide back to armed conflict.***

The lessons of the conflict in Sierra Leone and the challenges now facing the country in the post-conflict period, underscore the need for the Government, ECOWAS and the international community to embrace disarmament in small arms and light weapons as one

of the guiding principles in preventing the occurrence or recurrence of conflicts.

***Following the successful Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme, consideration should be given to a formal "weapons for development" project similar to those undertaken in Albania and Niger.***

Timely and preventive disarmament measures could have saved the lives and spared the limbs of thousands of victims of the prolonged rebel war. Such measures could have also substantially reduced the financial implications of bringing the war to an end. Sierra Leone is of course in a post-war situation. However, only an effective disarmament strategy, especially across its borders, can ensure that conflict does not recur and that fighting in Liberia does not escalate into another brutal conflict that could spill over to the neighboring countries.

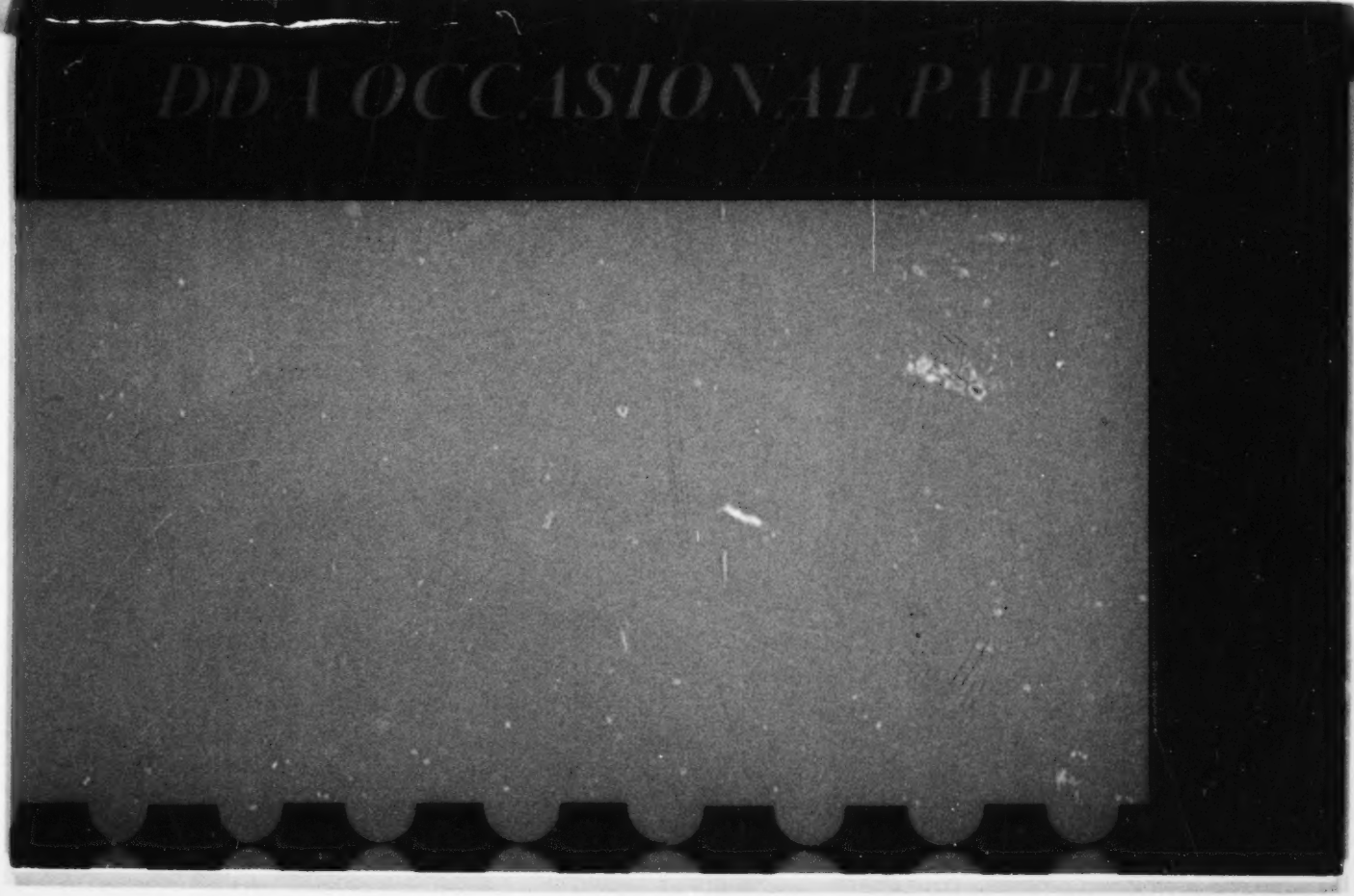
* * *

## ANNEX

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AFRC | Armed Forces Revolutionary Council |
| BWC | Biological Weapons Convention |
| BICC | Bonn International Center for Conversion |
| CDF | Civil Defense Force |
| CD | Conference on Disarmament |
| CACD | Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme (Sierra Leone) |
| CCPDC | Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict |
| DDR | disarmament, demobilization and reintegration |
| ECOMOG | Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group |
| ECOWAS | Economic Commission of West African States |
| GIS | Group of Interested States |
| ICBL | International Campaign to Ban Landmines |
| IDP | Internationally Displaced Persons |
| NCDDR | National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration |
| NRC | National Reformation Council |
| NPRC | National Provisional Ruling Council |
| PCASED | Programme of Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development |
| RPB | rocket-propelled bomb |
| RPG | rocket-propelled grenade |

| | |
|---|---|
| RUF | Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone) |
| SALW | Small arms and light weapons |
| SAS | Small Arms Survey |
| SIPRI | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute |
| UNAMSIL | United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone |
| WMD | weapons of mass destruction |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